



HERESIES AND FACTIONS

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MÉMOIRES ET DOCUMENTS

HERESIES AND FACTIONS

“The part played by the Blues and Greens ... in Byzantine history from its earliest years till the reign of Heraclius is not yet fully known and many problems still await a solution ; yet one thing is certain, the religious evolution of Byzantium and of the whole East is inseparably bound up with the rivalry between the foremost Circus parties” ⁽¹⁾.

The Blues are conventionally supposed to have been orthodox, the Greens monophysite. More important, the converse has also been assumed : not only were all Greens monophysites ; all monophysites were Greens. These equations have resulted in an enormous oversimplification and distortion of the religious history of the fifth and sixth centuries. For example, solely on the basis of a sixth century inscription from Gortyn mentioning the Greens ⁽²⁾, it has recently been assumed ‘that monophysitism had found adherents among the populace of Crete’ ⁽³⁾. With the full complexities of the doctrinal rivalries of the period we are not (fortunately) primarily concerned. What does concern us is the conventional assumption that riots between Blues and Greens sprang from nothing so simple as the victory or defeat of this or that colour in the hippodrome ; that factional rivalry is a direct reflection of religious rivalry ⁽⁴⁾.

So firmly entrenched has this view become in all the standard histories and handbooks, seldom qualified with any word of caution

(1) F. DVORNIK, *The Photian Schism* (1948), pp. 6-7.

(2) M. GUARDUCCI, *Inscr. Cret.*, IV (1950), p. 513 (cf. *Porphyrius*, p. 75).

(3) S. SPYRIDAKIS, *Circus Factions in Sixth-Century Crete*, in *GRBS*, VIII (1967), pp. 249-50.

(4) An assumption that underlies JARRY's *Hérésies et Factions dans l'empire byzantin* (1968) no less than the work of Manojlović's school. Yet despite the fact that he rejected the Manojlović/Grégoire interpretation (rightly, if for the wrong reason), Jarry never thought to query the assumption itself.

or hint of doubt, that it comes as a surprise to discover that there is not one scrap of ancient evidence in its favour. If it could be shown to be even a plausible inference, that might be something. But it cannot. On the contrary, on the basis of such evidence as there is, I would suggest :

(a) That in general the Greens were every bit as orthodox as the Blues.

(b) That in general religious motives played no part in factional rivalry.

(c) That the factions did not, *as factions*, take any part in religious disputes.

I

Conventional studies have laid most weight on an alleged coincidence between the religious and factional sympathies of the Emperors. Indeed, many have rested their case on this alone. It would be hard to imagine a weaker foundation.

Of the fifteen odd Emperors between Theodosius II and Heraclius only four are known to have been Greens (Theodosius, Zeno, Maurice, Heraclius) ; and three Blues (Marcian, Justinian, Phocas) — of whom one is a special case. All three Blue Emperors were Chalcedonian, it is true, but of the four Green Emperors only one — Zeno — can really be called monophysite. What of those unaccounted for? It should be obvious that so small is the sample that just one counter example would suffice to bring down the whole edifice. There are in fact no fewer than five — or six, if we may count Phocas twice. In short, the exceptions are in a majority.

The most flagrant is Justinian's wife Theodora. Her devotion to the monophysite cause was notorious, a serious embarrassment to her orthodox husband ⁽¹⁾. Not less notorious was her support of the Blues ⁽²⁾.

Justin II announced on his accession a policy of strict neutrality between the factions ⁽³⁾, evidently hoping thereby to avoid the

(1) E.g. STEIN, *Bas-Empire*, II (1949), p. 377f.

(2) PROCOPIUS, *Anecd.*, x. 16-18, cf. ix. 2-7.

(3) THEOPHANES, p. 243, 4-9.

factional violence of the previous reign, exacerbated by Justinian's undisguised partiality for the Blues. And he was apparently successful. At any rate there is no hint of trouble from either faction throughout his reign. Yet at the same time Justin was a stern persecutor of monophysitism. If Greens were monophysites and monophysites Greens, how can these two policies be reconciled?

Despite Dölger's strained attempt to make him a Blue ⁽¹⁾, the ancient evidence makes it fairly clear that Maurice was a Green ⁽²⁾. And it was largely for this reason that Grégoire and Vasiliev argued that he was, if not an outright monophysite, at any rate sympathetic to the monophysite cause. Seldom can so insubstantial a theory have led to the disregard of so many hard facts. The proofs of Maurice's Chalcedonianism are manifold and incontrovertible ⁽³⁾. He was damned on all sides as a persecutor by monophysite writers, upheld as a peerless champion of orthodoxy by the Pope ⁽⁴⁾.

As for Phocas, though it is true that he was orthodox and that he was supported by the Blues in the latter part of his reign, it is also true that he was proclaimed Emperor in the first place by

(1) *BZ*, XXXVI (1937), pp. 542-3.

(2) THEOPHANES, p. 287.13, and the passage of JOHN OF EPHEBUS and chronicle fragment discussed below, pp. 109 f.; cf. (on the controversy over this point between Grégoire and Dölger) VASILIEV, *The Life of St. Theodore of Edessa*, in *Byzantion*, XVI (1942/3), pp. 184-5, and A. MARICQ, *BARB*, XXXV (1949), p. 64, n. 1.

(3) Most are assembled in R. PARET's excellent study, *Dometianus de Mélitène et la politique religieuse de l'empereur Maurice*, in *REB*, XV (1957), pp. 42-72. The late Syriac account of the death of Maurice, counting him a saint, to which Vasiliev drew attention (*Byzantion*, l.c.), is as nothing set against the hard near-contemporary evidence, and in any case is probably not Jacobite at all (as Vasiliev had supposed) but Nestorian (as Nau had suspected), in which case the argument falls to the ground (PARET, *op. cit.*, p. 72, n. 2). It is particularly strange that Grégoire should have appealed to the supposed Armenian origin (probably legendary) of Maurice in support (*Le Muséon*, LIX (1946), p. 295f. and elsewhere), since it was in his relations with the monophysite Armenians in particular that his intransigent Chalcedonianism became most evident; cf. P. GOUBERT, *Byzance avant l'Islam*, I (1951), p. 211f., PARET, *op. cit.*, p. 66f. The same applies to his relations with Georgia and the Lakhmid Arabs, to judge by their conversion to Chalcedonianism precisely during Maurice's reign: GOUBERT, *op. cit.*, p. 231f., p. 264f. On Grégoire's fallacious argument from the St. Euphemia legend, see below, p. 112.

(4) GREGORY, *Registrum*, IX, p. 135 (*PL*, LXXVII, 981a).

the Greens ⁽¹⁾. How would exponents of the traditional view explain the paradox of the Greens supporting two Chalcedonian Emperors in succession? They could of course point out that the Greens did eventually desert both Emperors. They might even suggest that it was precisely because of their Chalcedonianism that both were thus deserted. Yet, if so, it would be truly astonishing if the Greens had made the same blunder three times in a row by championing (as they did) the no less orthodox Heraclius in his rebellion against Phocas in 610 ⁽²⁾. No one can seriously believe that orthodoxy was the issue in the bitter strife between Blues and Greens that accompanied the fall of Phocas and the accession of Heraclius.

But the weakest link in the chain is the one on which most has been made to depend: Anastasius, the only Emperor to make a serious attempt to establish monophysitism as the creed of the capital. Conventional studies talk freely of a 'Green supremacy' fostered by Anastasius followed by a 'Blue reaction' fostered by Justinian. There are one or two facts here, but the vital links which supply the motivations are missing. Justinian did favour the Blues, but no source says that he did so because they supported his religious policies. It is possible (though not certain) that the Greens were dominant under Anastasius, yet he was definitely *not* himself a Green, nor did he tolerate their violence.

Several illustrations of this equation have been alleged, all of them built on sand. Vitalian, for example, according to Dvornik ⁽³⁾, drew support for his rebellion against the 'Green' Anastasius from the 'orthodox' Blues. True, Vitalian was Chalcedonian, yet there is no more evidence that he was supported by the Blues than that Anastasius was supported by the Greens. Nor is there

(1) Though their role in his proclamation is much less important than has hitherto been assumed.

(2) There is nothing to suggest that Heraclius was anything but Chalcedonian at the time of his accession. The fact that he eventually lent his name to the ill-fated conciliatory formula of monotheletism, promulgated in 638, is entirely irrelevant to the support he won from the Greens in 610. It is thus quite misleading when (e.g.) Dvornik writes of the publication of the *Ecthesis* revealing 'certain imperial sympathies for the Greens' (*Byzantina-Metabyzantina*, I, 1946, p. 128).

(3) *BM*, I (1946), p. 127.

the slightest evidence that Leo (457-474) 'looked for his support among the orthodox Blues', or that Zeno dethroned the monophysite usurper Basiliscus (475-6) 'with the Blues' assistance in return for his reluctant championship of orthodoxy' ⁽¹⁾. We do not know which colour Leo supported, and it would be strange if Zeno had been backed in such an enterprise by the Blues when (in Malalas' words) he was the darling of the Greens ⁽²⁾. The claim that the Nika revolt of 532 was an attempt by the Greens to direct Justinian to 'a more reasonable religious policy' ⁽³⁾ is utterly perverse : the revolt was caused by both factions united and the usurper they backed was as orthodox as Justinian ⁽⁴⁾.

These are just typical examples of vital gaps in our documentation being filled in by conjecture. Of course, in such an ill-documented period the historian must resort to conjecture at some points if he is to make anything of the pitifully fragmentary evidence. Yet there must be some basis for his conjectures in that evidence or he will simply be imposing his own pattern on it. I would suggest that there is no intelligible pattern in the factional and religious allegiances of the Emperors.

II

But the real weakness in the conventional view is the absence of evidence where it might have been most expected : in the ecclesiastical historians, the popular chronicles, the lives of saints, the abundant sectarian literature of the period, and in accounts of actual sectarian disputes.

Let us take another look at the reign of Anastasius. It is certain that Anastasius' policies, particularly his ecclesiastical policy, gave rise to much ill will and even violence. Clearly there was also much factional violence, especially from the Greens. Now if this factional

(1) DVORNIK, *op. cit.*, p. 126.

(2) P. 379.

(3) DVORNIK, *op. cit.*, p. 127.

(4) For further decisive objections to this thesis, see STEIN, *Bas-Empire*, II (1949), p. 449, n. 2 ('Théodora était monophysite et Hypatius catholique, alors que la thèse en question demanderait l'inverse, mais encore et surtout parce que la sédition Nika eut lieu à un moment où la persécution violente des monophysites avait cessé depuis quelques mois').

rivalry sprang directly from the religious rivalry, why is it that no ancient source took what modern scholars have found such an easy and obvious step, and linked the two? Indeed, if the evidence for religious and factional disturbances is analysed more closely, it emerges that almost all the factional riots took place in the first half of the reign, almost all the religious protests in the second, when Anastasius was beginning to lean increasingly towards monophysitism. I have in fact argued elsewhere that factional rivalry had to a great extent subsided before the religious troubles began ⁽¹⁾.

Nor do we find in our sources any hint of the link (which moderns again have found so obvious) between the eclipse of the Greens by the Blues after Anastasius' death and the eclipse of monophysitism by Chalcedonianism under his successors. And once we have seen that Anastasius neither supported nor was supported by the Greens, all basis for linking this alleged supremacy of the Greens with Anastasius' own leanings to monophysitism disappears. And if there is no connection between the behaviour of the Greens and monophysitism under Anastasius, why should there be any connection between the rise of the Blues under Justinian and Chalcedonianism?

Indeed, a closer look at the evidence might suggest that there is little enough support for this notion of a period of 'Green supremacy' under Anastasius at all (at least as it is formulated in modern accounts). Certainly there were several occasions when the Greens took the initiative in factional violence. In 498 several Greens were arrested for throwing stones, and a serious riot ensued ⁽²⁾. In 501 ⁽³⁾ they ambushed the Blues in the Hippodrome, and their disgraceful behaviour at Antioch in 507 under Porphyrius' leadership will be discussed further below ⁽⁴⁾. They caused trouble there at the beginning of Anastasius' reign as well ⁽⁵⁾.

However, on the two latter occasions, Anastasius promptly sent troops against them under commanders who had been granted

(1) See *Porphyrius the charioteer* (1973), p. 239.

(2) MALALAS, p. 394. 11f., *Exc. de Insid.*, p. 168. 11f.; *Chron. Pasch.*, p. 608. 1f.

(3) MARCELLINUS, s.a. 501 (*Chr. Min.*, II, p. 95); Jo., *Ant. fr.* 101 (*Exc. de Insid.*, p. 142. 2f.; MALALAS, *Exc. de Insid.*, p. 168. 26f.; THEOPHANES, p. 147. 17f.; Only the full account of Marcellinus mentions the Green initiative.

(4) See p. 118.

(5) MALALAS, pp. 392-3.

special emergency powers. In 498 as well he had responded to a request for the release of some Green malefactors by sending the excubitors against them — with disastrous results. Half the Hippodrome was burned down, and Anastasius himself narrowly escaped injury. In the face of facts such as these it is difficult to account for the modern myth that Anastasius allowed or encouraged Green violence — or to see why it is that the Greens are supposed to have supported Anastasius.

Much has been made of the fact that Anastasius appointed as city prefect after the violence of 498 a 'patron of the Greens' called Plato, who happens also to have been a monophysite (1). But rather than see this as a typical example of Anastasius packing his administration with Greens, it would be more natural to see it as a desperate attempt to pacify the Greens after his unnecessarily harsh suppression of their protest (after all, the implication is that the former city prefect had *not* been a Green).

And the fact that Plato was a monophysite as well as a Green is probably best put down to simple coincidence, with no wider implications. For when Plato backed Anastasius' attempt in 512 to have the monophysite addition to the Trishagion chanted in St. Sophia and other churches in Constantinople, the most militant opposition came from *both* factions, as we learn from the chronicle of Victor Tunnunensis, based here on excellent contemporary material (2). There was a clamour on all sides for Plato to be thrown to the beasts (3)! This passage of Victor is especially important, since it is the only place in the whole of extant literature where either faction is mentioned in connection with the monophysite controversy. Modern accounts quite unwarrantably assume that only the Blues opposed Anastasius on this occasion (e.g., 'The orthodox, the Blues, rose in horror ...') (4). The only evidence we possess states categorically that both Greens and Blues opposed

(1) MALALAS, pp. 393.4.

(2) S.a. 513 (*Chron. Min.*, II, p. 195): 'prasinorum ... simulque et venetorum turbae adversus Anastasium imp. unitae'. VICTOR's entries for the reign of Anastasius derive from the *Hist. Eccl.* of THEODORE LECTOR, completed ca. 518: see G. C. Hansen's edition (GCS, Berlin, 1971), XXXI, p. 145.

(3) MARCELLINUS, s.a. 512.6 (*Chron. Min.*, II, p. 98): see STEIN, *Bas-Empire*, II (1949), pp. 177-8, for sources on this riot.

(4) J. LINDSAY, *Byzantium into Europe* (1952), 118 f.

Anastasius. And after the crisis was over, he punished both with equal harshness ⁽¹⁾.

Vasiliev fancied that the Porphyrius epigrams propped up this house of cards. 'The epigrams', he writes ⁽²⁾, 'give us a very interesting picture of how gradually Porphyrius, whose racing triumphs fascinated Anastasius, under pressing imperial influence, left the Blues in order to enter officially the imperial party of the Greens'. When Justin and Justinian 'drastically changed Anastasius' religious policy ... the faction of the Blues ... became the more influential' ⁽³⁾. 'This change', Vasiliev concludes, 'in the religious orientation of the Byzantine government may be clearly traced in the epigrams dedicated to Porphyrius, who became *persona grata* among the Blues, of course with the consent and probably with the recommendation of the Emperor'.

Now we have seen that on our other evidence this interpretation of factional rivalry is false. But it is certainly true that the chariot-teen-epigrams are by far our best contemporary source for the factions under Anastasius. So if they did lend any support to the traditional picture, that would be important.

In fact, a new and more firmly based chronology for Porphyrius reveals that he changed colours more frequently than the traditional view could allow ⁽⁴⁾. Whether or not Anastasius was really 'fascinated' with Porphyrius' triumphs, it is certainly true that his permission must have been obtained for the erection of Porphyrius' statues ⁽⁵⁾. Yet it was the Blues who were allowed to put up the first statue, *ca.* 500 and though it was followed within a year or so by one from the Greens, two more from the Blues followed in rapid succession. The balance was only partially redressed by a second from the Greens several years later in 515. Had Anastasius wished to show favour to the Greens, he could easily have withheld his permission from the Blues, and either left the score at one statue each or levelled it more quickly. The mere fact that he allowed this succession of quite unprecedented honours from the Blues must be held to constitute a definite policy. Here, then, we have

(1) MALALAS, fr. 42, *Exc. de Ins.*, p. 170.12f.

(2) *DOP*, IV (1948), p. 42.

(3) *Op. cit.*, p. 45.

(4) See *Porphyrius*, Ch. v. *passim*.

(5) *Porphyrius*, p. 227.

irrefutable evidence that at least in the middle years of his reign Anastasius showed marked favour to the *Blues*.

Naturally, this does not square with the traditional view. But it does square with the conclusion drawn above from the other evidence : namely that Anastasius often treated the Greens very harshly. I am not suggesting for a moment that Anastasius is to be regarded as a Blue⁽¹⁾. We have the express statement of Malalas that he deliberately reserved his favour for the Reds in order to have a free hand in punishing both the major colours indifferently, and there seems no good reason to question it⁽²⁾. The fact that he did allow the Greens two statues shows that his attitude towards them was not consistently hostile, and we know that they supported him at a critical moment against the usurper Vitalian⁽³⁾. If his smile rested less often on the Greens than on the Blues, this was simply because at this period the Greens were giving more trouble than the Blues.

Let us take an example from the period of Blue terrorism under Justin I. The man who brought the Blues of Antioch to their knees (in 524/5) was Ephraim of Amida, then Count of the East⁽⁴⁾. By 527 Ephraim became patriarch of Antioch, and soon established himself as a fanatical persecutor of monophysites⁽⁵⁾. The fact that he maltreated Blues while Count does not (of course) prove him a Green. Yet it is hard to believe that so intolerant a Chalcedonian would have employed such drastic measures against his own co-religionists, potential allies in his own battle for orthodoxy.

III

The silence of sectarian writers calls for a word of further comment. It is relevant not only to the monophysite / orthodox interpretation, but also to any other interpretation of factional

(1) Jarry's attempt (*Syria*, XXXVII (1960), pp. 351-5 ; *Hérésies et Factions* (1968), 283) to prove that Anastasius was a Blue, where not merely frivolous, depends on two other theories, both of them mistaken : (a) that Reds were linked with Blues instead of Greens and (b) that the Blues represent the upper and the Greens the lower classes.

(2) P. 393.9f.

(3) See *Porphyrius*, p. 126.

(4) MALALAS, pp. 416, 20f. ; cf. STEIN, *Bas-Empire*, II (1949), p. 240.

(5) STEIN, p. 377, 384.

rivalry in religious terms. To Jarry's, for example, which sees a basic dichotomy between orthodox moderates (Blues) and orthodox extremists (Greens), while distributing lesser groups such as Agnoetes, Barnasuphians, Eutychianists Gaianists, Julianists, Marcianists, Messalianists — not to mention Jews, Samaritans, Manichees and even pagans — with a sure hand between the peripheries of the two major colours (¹).

Let us consider the ecclesiastical histories of Evagrius and John of Ephesus, written from the Chalcedonian and monophysite points of view respectively, towards the end of the sixth century. Naturally enough both have much to say about the multifarious battles of orthodoxy (differently interpreted) against heresy. Yet neither mentions the circus factions in this connection, despite the fact that both write of the troubles of Antioch and Alexandria as well as Constantinople, all centres racked by factional violence on and off throughout the sixth century.

Nor is this just an argument from silence. Both writers do mention the factions, Evagrius three times. On the first occasion (iv. 13) Evagrius gives a brief account (from Procopius) of the Nika revolt, which (unlike so many modern scholars) he treats as a purely secular affair. The second passage (iv. 32) is a sharp attack on Justinian for his open protection of the Blues (referred to contemptuously as *θάτέρω τῶν μερῶν, τῷ κτανέω φημί*) from the consequences of their crimes. Not only does he see the Emperor's relations with the factions to be a purely civil matter: despite both his own orthodoxy and his approval of Justinian's orthodoxy, he disapproves of Justinian's favours to the supposedly orthodox Blues. Third, he describes the opposition of the people of Antioch to their patriarch Gregory in 583 (vi. 7). For once both factions united (²), chanting insults in the streets and the theatre. Evagrius, a protégé of Gregory, is evasive about the nature of his alleged misdemeanours. John of Ephesus, less reticent but no more plausible, accuses him of sacrificing a small boy in the company of a future patriarch of Alexandria (³). John also gives a nice account

(1) *Hérésies et Factions* (1968), *passim*. Detailed refutation of each item will not be necessary; it will be enough to point out that there is not one single scrap of ancient evidence for any one of these attributions.

(2) *ἄμφω τοιγαροῦν τὸ δῆμω ἐς μίαν συνήντην γνώμην* (VI, 7, p. 226.6 Bidez/Parmentier): the dual makes it clear that the two 'demes' are meant, namely the Blues and Greens.

(3) *HE*, III, 29, p. 213 Payne Smith.

of Gregory's trip to Constantinople for trial, where he glutted the senate and clergy with lavish bribes before hiring a troupe of pantomime dancers to take home with him. On his return he paid for, and personally superintended, the erection of a new hippodrome⁽¹⁾. Whether or not this 'church of Satan' eventually won the factions over, in 583 at any rate, whatever the precise nature of the religious issues involved in the case against Gregory, we have another example of both Blues and Greens united against a common threat to their faith.

John of Ephesus' one reference⁽²⁾ is to a riot between the factions of purely secular origin (p. 113). Now is it really credible that John and Evagrius both failed to perceive that the Greens and Blues were the militant fronts of their respective parties — if they were indeed such? It is no satisfactory way out to argue that the factions were extremists, disowned by responsible churchmen on both sides. Had this been the case, Justinian's partiality for the Blues would have been the more provocative still, and the silence of monophysite sources even more incredible.

There is a nice parallel in the history of the African church (and many others in more recent times). There the division was between Catholics and Donatists, and on the Donatist side was an extremist wing known under the name 'circumcellions', a 'combination of gypsy and itinerant Hot Gospeller'⁽³⁾ who were undoubtedly responsible for much irresponsible violence. Naturally enough Catholics exploited the embarrassing connection: if all Circumcellions were Donatists, might not all Donatists be Circumcellions? At the very least, all Donatists might be blamed for fostering or protecting circumcellions.

Yet in all the period of Green violence under Anastasius and Blue violence under Justinian, no sectarian writer even hints at a link with the religious policy of either Emperor. Nor among the many enormities laid at the doors of the unscrupulous princes of the various churches, does anyone include factional violence.

The true significance of the factional issue in sectarian abuse can be beautifully illustrated from two texts hitherto unexploited

(1) V. 17, pp. 225-6 Payne Smith.

(2) III.9, p. 182.

(3) BROWN (Peter), *Augustine of Hippo* (1967), p. 229.

in this connection. The first lurks among the complaints brought by the Chalcedonian clergy of Apamea against their monophysite bishop at a local synod in 518 ⁽¹⁾. The bishop, Peter, was alleged (among other delicts) to have consorted for long periods alone with an actress of the Blue faction called Stephane. Whether he was guilty or no is irrelevant. What matters is that Chalcedonians were prepared to use this sort of ammunition to blacken the name of a monophysite. It follows (a) that they cannot have seen the Blues as their natural allies against monophysitism; and (b) that on the contrary the Blues are mentioned here solely as an example of the sort of disreputable rowdies (*ἄτακτοι*) that a heretic might be expected to associate with.

The other is from a tract which Nicephorus, patriarch of Constantinople, wrote against the iconoclasts between 818 and 820 ⁽²⁾. Among the iconoclasts, he alleged, you will find ex-soldiers, actors, tradesmen, pimps, beggars and 'the leaders of the circus partisans' (*οἱ ἐκ τῶν ἐν τοῖς δῆμοις χρωμάτων τῆς ἱππικῆς ἀμίλλης προῦχοντες*). Much the same conclusions follow. (a) Nicephorus does not single out just one faction as natural iconoclasts; obviously he has both in mind. And (b) they are again quoted as a typical example of the sort of rowdies (*καθάπερ ἦν τῆς ἀκόσμου αὐτῶν συμμορίας ἄξιον*) you would expect to find keeping company with heretics.

There is in fact just one other text, again unnoticed hitherto, in which the factions are mentioned in connection with the violence arising out of doctrinal controversy: at Alexandria in the late 480s. The protagonists were Peter Mongus, the patriarch, and a monk called Nephalius. Peter sat uncomfortably (and unscrupulously) on the fence, first denouncing then recognising Chalcedon, but unable to come to terms with the radical monophysite monks of Egypt, whom he drove from Alexandria by force. For a while Nephalius led a spirited opposition, rallying the monks and at

(1) Read again at the synod held in 536 at Constantinople and preserved among the *acta* of that synod: *ACO*, III, p. 96.17f. A number of witnesses swore to Peter's association with Stephane: *ib.*, p. 96.17; p. 100.13; p. 102.2, 23; p. 102, 35; p. 103.8; p. 108.24.

(2) *ApOL.*, 9 (*P.G.*, C, 556A).

one point Zeno himself against Peter ⁽¹⁾. According to Zacharias Scholasticus, Peter contrived to win much popular support in Alexandria, especially among 'ceux qui formaient les partis dans la ville ⁽²⁾'. Surely the circus parties; the Syriac word used, 'gabbe', is not in itself an unmistakable pointer to circus rather than other parties (though what other parties could be meant?), but fortunately there is a marginal gloss in the only manuscript (untranslated in the standard edition): 'he means the *Béveroi* and the *Πρόδοινοι*' ⁽³⁾. So informed and intelligent a comment must be early and is surely correct. Zacharias does not say that one party supported Peter and the other Nephalius. The clear implication (as with the Nicephorus passage) is that all those who belonged to the parties supported Peter — and were no doubt those responsible for the 'riots and massacres' mentioned earlier in the same sentence. So here again we find the factions united in their support of the same religious faction, a faction moreover that was trying, however ineffectually, to steer a middle path between the extremes of Chalcedonianism and monophysitism. Perhaps the only occasion when the Blues and Greens can be discovered as the storm troopers of a religious leader, it is a leader with no clear cut doctrinal position at all.

As it happens Evagrius is the only ecclesiastical historian ever to mention the factional allegiance of an Emperor. Virtually all our information on this subject comes from the chroniclers. And their interest in it reflects less the genuine political (still less religious) significance of an Emperor's factional sympathies than the enthusiasm for such matters felt by the audience at which the chronicles were aimed.

Malalas, for example, in a chronicle of modest compass, will give detailed information about the four new dancers presented to the factions in 490 (real names, stage names, native cities) ⁽⁴⁾.

(1) For a clear picture of this rather confusing situation (eventually the protagonists switched roles, Nephalius veering to Chalcedon and Peter finally establishing his credibility with the monks), see STEIN, *Bas-Empire*, II (1949), pp. 34-6.

(2) *Vie de Sévère, Patrol. Orient.*, II.1 (1903), p. 101.7.

(3) I am grateful to Sebastian Brock for drawing my attention to and translating this note.

(4) P. 386.14f.

Two important things happened in January 563: rebellion in Africa — and the death of the charioteer Julianicus in a crash ⁽¹⁾. We may compare Chrysostom's sad story of the charioteer who was killed in the arena the day before his wedding ⁽²⁾, or the theatrical outpouring of grief on the death of Porphyrius' rival Constantine ⁽³⁾ — and compare the news value of the death of a top racing driver today. Procopius and Agathias would not have bothered with such information any more than Evagrius. Procopius only draws attention to Justinian's partisanship of the Blues because of its obvious relevance to the Nika revolt ⁽⁴⁾; and Agathias only refers to Justinian squandering money on charioteers and dancers because it was money that should have been spent on maintaining an army fit to defend the city against the Huns in 559 ⁽⁵⁾. Neither they nor any other secular historians record the factional sympathy of other Emperors. The chroniclers did so as a matter of course because such things were important to their public.

These chronicles, and especially Malalas, allow the modern reader, as Norman Baynes remarked in a vivid page, to form 'some conception of the things which really interested the good citizens of the Eastern Empire: with a little imagination he will at once supply the missing headlines and his own Sunday paper will appear as a flagrant plagiarism' ⁽⁶⁾. The very stuff of social history, of course — but we should not be misled into treating their selection of facts and emphasis as an accurate reflection of the political and religious realities of the day.

Of course the chroniclers were interested in church affairs too, though naturally enough there tends to be more on the scandalous behaviour of individual bishops than on church councils and christological definitions. Yet despite the fact that they alone of our sources record both religious and factional rivalries, especially of the more sensational variety, not even the chronicles link the

(1) P. 495.17.

(2) *Hom. ix. 1 in Jo.*, 5.17 (*P.G.*, LXIII, 512) — Antioch, ca. 391.

(3) *A. Pal.*, XV, 41-3, *A. Plan.*, 365-375, with *Porphyrius*, pp. 136 f.

(4) *Anecd.*, VII, *passim*.

(5) *Hist.*, v. 14.4, p. 181 Keydell.

(6) *The Byzantine Empire* (1925), p. 35.

two. Take for example Malalas' brief notice on Marcian⁽¹⁾. He mentions both the convocation of the council of Chalcedon, by which monophysitism was firmly anathematized, and Marcian's antipathy to the Greens. What he does not do, even by implication (i.e. by juxtaposing the paragraphs) is to suggest that there was any connection between these two policies. It is only modern scholars who have inferred that it was Marcian's orthodoxy that led him to persecute the Greens.

The only time that a chronicler does mention the factions in connection with monophysitism, he (Victor Tunnunensis) does so, not because this was the issue on which they were perennially divided, but because in 512 at least it seemed to them such a danger to their common orthodoxy that they united in its defence.

For our present purpose, one of the most interesting of the chroniclers is John of Nikiu, a coptic bishop in Upper Egypt at the end of the seventh century. He has much of interest on the role of the factions in the civil war that led to the fall of Phocas⁽²⁾, but he never suggests that they took sides in accordance with the religious issue. Indeed, it is more than likely that both factions in seventh century Egyptian cities would be monophysite — as too perhaps in Gregory's Antioch. Later John describes how the civil and military authorities of Alexandria in 640 enlisted the Blues and Greens respectively in a struggle for power, concluding: 'it has been said that this strife and tumult originated in religious dissensions'⁽³⁾. He means religious dissensions between the protagonists rather than their bully boys the factions, but what is interesting is that he apparently does not take this suggestion very seriously, and gives no details. Evidently he cannot have been familiar with the notion of religious dissension as *the* *raison d'être* of *all* factional rivalry and violence. Further refutation of the Green / monophysite equation should by now be superfluous, but it is worth drawing attention to § 97.11, where rebellious Greens, together with Blues, are said to have plotted with a Chalcedonian patriarch.

(1) Pp. 367-8.

(2) *The Chronicle of John, Bishop of Nikiu*, translated by R. H. Charles (1916), pp. 167-177, studied by Jarry in two papers (of which I can accept little) in *BIFAO*, LXII (1964), p. 173f. and 187f.

(3) *Ch.* 119.18, p. 190 Charles.

IV

Surprisingly enough it is easier to prove the Greens orthodox than the Blues. Not that there is any reason to believe the Blues anything but orthodox; it is just that evidence happens to be lacking.

For the Greens, let us take first the famous dialogue between the Greens and the Mandator wrongly linked with the Nika revolt by Theophanes⁽¹⁾. The Greens protest that they are treated unjustly and the Mandator, the spokesman of the Emperor, rebukes them, openly taking the side of the Blues. According to Bury there are hints in the dialogue of the monophysitism of the Greens⁽²⁾. According to Jarry there are hints of their extreme Nestorianism, verging on Manichaeism⁽³⁾. Both have read far too much into the commonplace mutual abuse of the two parties.

For example, when the Mandator calls the Greens 'Jews, Samaritans and Manichaeans', it so happens that they only expressly repudiate the first two names. But this does not mean they deserved the third. Had they really been Manichees, the Mandator would not have confused the issue by dragging in the other two names. All three are in fact frequently linked in Byzantine religious abuse⁽⁴⁾.

Two sentences later the Mandator says: 'I would have you all baptised in the name of one God' (*εἰς ἕνα*). That is to say, he is implying that the Greens are polytheists. They reply indignantly 'I am baptised in one God' (*εἰς ἕνα*, again). It has been alleged that they have deliberately twisted his words into an allusion to their monophysitism. But (as Jarry remarked)⁽⁵⁾ monophysites did *not* in fact administer baptism *εἰς ἕνα* (i.e. in the name of only one of the persons of the trinity) any more than did the Chalcedonians. Why doubt that the Greens are simply repudiating the

(1) THEOPHANES, pp. 181-4 (cf. P. MAAS, *BZ*, XXI (1912), 31 f.

(2) See MANOJLOVIĆ, *Byz.*, XI (1936), p. 646.

(3) *Syria*, XXXVII (1960), p. 361f.; *Hérésies et Factions* (1968), p. 117f.

(4) They are constantly evoked by John of Ephesus as the source of all trouble and temptation. 'Manichee' is an insult applied indifferently by Chalcedonian to monophysite and monophysite to Chalcedonian: see R. PARET, *REB*, XV (1957), p. 60, n. 1.

(5) *Op. cit.*, p. 356.

implication that they are pagans, as they had already repudiated the Mandator's other cheap smears? Indeed, the most interesting thing about the Mandator's accusations is precisely that they are restricted to the meaningless smears of everyday abuse. The one thing he does *not* do is accuse them of a specific doctrinal shortcoming. We may compare the Greens' own counter-smear: that it is better to be a Jew or even a pagan than a Blue.

Much more significant, immediately before this remark of the Mandator, the Greens reply to another bit of abuse with the words 'If anyone denies that our lord the Emperor is orthodox, let him be anathema as Judas'. This puzzling remark has attracted little attention⁽¹⁾. Yet surely it is just an allusive way of saying that the Greens hold the *same* views as the Emperor. To doubt their orthodoxy is like doubting the Emperor's. That is to say, they are claiming to be as orthodox as Justinian.

The next text is an acclamation from the Greens in honour of Verina the widow of Leo, preserved in the eighth century *Παραστάσεις σύντομαι χρονικαί*⁽²⁾. The Greens are said to have chanted when she crowned her brother Basiliscus Emperor: *Βερίνης ὀρθοδόξου Ἐλένης, πολλὰ τὰ ἔτη*, after which the author comments: *ἦν γὰρ ὀρθόδοξος πάνν*.

Now there are difficulties in accepting this story as it stands. In all probability Verina did not crown Basiliscus. Her plan had been to make her lover Patricius Emperor with Basiliscus' aid, but the ambitious Basiliscus played her false and seized the throne for himself, after which Verina began plotting for his downfall. The acclamation itself looks authentic, as do several others preserved in the *Παραστάσεις*, no doubt taken from factional records (which we know to have existed). Most, like this one, were misplaced (one on Leo III, for example, is applied to Leo I)⁽³⁾. It is perhaps worth mentioning that Verina did in fact crown another Augustus nine years later, the short-lived usurper Leontius. It is unlikely that the acclamation refers to this occasion, since Leontius was crowned in Antioch and never reached Constantinople.

(1) P. MAAS, *BZ*, XXI (1912), p. 50, inferred that the Greens are combatting doubts expressed as to the Emperor's orthodoxy, obviously not appropriate to Justinian in 532.

(2) § 29, ed. T. Preger (*Script. Orig. Cpol.*, I, 1901), p. 37.10: the work dates from the eighth century: see *Porphyrius*, p. 112.

(3) P. 20.16 Preger.

But any two events that can be confused the author of the *Παραστάσεις* usually does, and it could be that he did so here. It would be less easy to explain how and why the acclamation itself might have come to be invented. The simplest solution is that the author inserted an authentic acclamation in a context of his own making.

The word 'orthodox' was not of course the exclusive property of those whom history has considered orthodox. So the fact that the Greens call Verina orthodox does not in itself prove that she was Chalcedonian. Independent evidence is required — fortunately forthcoming. First the author of the *Παραστάσεις*, certainly not himself a monophysite, who specifically comments that Verina was 'orthodox'. Second, her proclamation of Leontius in 484 contains an implicit attack on the monophysite Zeno as a heretic⁽¹⁾.

If Verina was Chalcedonian, then the Greens who acclaim her orthodoxy and name her a second Helen (the mother of Constantine) must themselves have been Chalcedonian.

We have seen how much has been made of the alleged link between the factional and religious sympathies of Emperors. It is thus the more surprising that upholders of the traditional view have generally ignored the one and only text which, with reference to factional rivalry, does actually link an Emperor's orthodoxy with his colour preference.

The passage in question is quoted as a scholion in *Vat. Gr.* 997 (s. x) f. 184v of Theophylact Simocatta and *Vat. Gr.* 52 (s. xiv-xv), f. 141r of Procopius, and evidently derives ultimately from a chronicle, very probably the early seventh century chronicle of John of Antioch. It describes how, on the birth of his first son on 4 August 583, the Emperor Maurice gratified the Greens by calling him Theodosius⁽²⁾:

τῶν οὖν Βενέτων κραζόντων Ἰουστινιανὸν καλεῖσθαι, οἱ Πράσινοι ἔκραζον Θεοδοσίον αὐτὸν καλεῖσθαι διὰ τὸ Θεοδοσίον τὸν βασιλέα ὀρθόδοξον γενέσθαι καὶ πολλὰ ἔτη ζῆσαι.

The Blues suggest the name Justinian, the Greens Theodosius, on two grounds: Theodosius (evidently Theodosius II) was ortho-

(1) J. B. BURY, *Later Roman Empire*², I (1923), p. 397, n. 4.

(2) See P. MAAS, *BZ*, XXI (1912), p. 29. For the date 583, P. GRIERSON, *DOP*, XV (1961), p. 222, n. 11 (rather than A. N. STRATOS, *Byzantium in the seventh century* (1968), 59, '584 or 585').

dox, and lived a long life. Once more, of course, the word 'orthodox' in itself proves nothing either way. And it is true that at the very end of his reign Theodosius II did yield to monophysite pressures, obliging his successor Marcian to re-establish imperial orthodoxy with the council of Chalcedon⁽¹⁾. So it might well look as if we had here a neat illustration of the traditional view: the Greens, being monophysites, chose the name of a monophysite Emperor in competition with the orthodox name Justinian put forward by the Blues.

However, Theodosius II went down to history as a model of Christian piety, with virtually no reference to his last minute monophysite concessions (which are in any case generally ascribed to the baleful influence of his chamberlain Chrysaphius, whom Marcian had executed). The influential ecclesiastical historians Socrates, Sozomen and Theodoret speak with especial warmth of his piety and godliness⁽²⁾. Admittedly they seem to have written before his monophysite lapse, and for all we know might have modified their eulogies had they written after. But the fact remains that they did write before, or at any rate ignored his lapse, and thus providentially saved his reputation for posterity. The patriographers even call him *θεοφιλής* ⁽³⁾, which they would hardly have done if they had known him as a heretic.

Merely on general grounds, then, it seems unlikely that later monophysites would have selected Theodosius (rather than, say Anastasius or Zeno) as the archetypal monophysite Emperor⁽⁴⁾. More important, it is clear from our scholion that the Blues at any rate did not interpret the Green choice of name in this way:

ἤρξαντο οὖν οἱ Βένετοι λέγειν οὕτως · « τὰ δωρηθέντα ἔτη
τῷ Ἰουστινιανῷ ὁ θεὸς παράσχη σοι ἐν εἰρήνῃ », ὅτι ἐστὶν
ἐνενήκοντα ἔτη καὶ πλείω · ἢ γὰρ ζωὴ Θεοδοσίου ἐγένετο
ἐνιαυτῶν πενήκοντα.

(1) See C. LUIBHEID, *Theodosius II and Heresy*, in *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, XVI (1965), pp. 13-38.

(2) W. E. KAEGI, *Byzantium and the Decline of Rome* (1968), p. 199f. (not commenting on Theodosius' monophysitism).

(3) PREGER, *Patria Cpoleos*, pp. 44.4, 173.10, 261.2 (A and C).

(4) Contrast GRÉGOIRE's extravagant claim (*Le Muséon*, LIX (1946), p. 297) that 'Théodose II était l'empereur pro-monophysite par excellence'.

That is to say, the Blues find fault, not with the Green claim that Theodosius was orthodox, but simply with Green arithmetic. Theodosius may have reigned longer than Justinian (42 as against 38 years of sole reign), but it was Justinian who actually lived longer (83 — not 90 plus — years as against a mere 50). What clearer proof could there be that on this occasion at least orthodoxy was not the major issue between the factions — the more so since Theodosius' claim to orthodoxy was so shaky, especially when compared with Justinian's.

For confirmation we may refer to John of Ephesus' statement that Maurice called his son Theodosius 'in allusion to Theodosius the second, who was the only one besides from the time of Constantine downwards who was born in the purple' ⁽¹⁾ (i.e. born to a reigning Emperor after his accession ⁽²⁾). No reference here to the rival suggestions of the factions, or to the rejected Blue proposal. But no hint either in this rabid monophysite writer that the name Theodosius was chosen for its monophysite associations.

We have no means of knowing why Maurice himself chose Theodosius. His main reason may well have been the one John underlined: that he was the first Emperor since Arcadius to sire a son in the purple. And the destined Theodosius III, like Theodosius II, was crowned Augustus as a boy ⁽³⁾. But it should be clear enough why the factions proposed the names they did. The Blues Justinian simply because Justinian had for so long been *the* Blue Emperor; and the Greens Theodosius because Theodosius II was *the* Green Emperor ⁽⁴⁾. The improbability of any anti-Chalcedonian associations attaching to the name Theodosius is further underlined by the fact that no less a person than the future Pope Gregory the great stood as the boy's godfather ⁽⁵⁾. It may be added that,

(1) *HE* v. 14.

(2) John is mistaken here: Honorius was born on 9 September 384, his father Theodosius I having come to the throne on 19 January 379.

(3) 26 March 590; THEOPHANES, A.M. 6082, with P. GRIERSON, *DOP*, XV (1961), p. 222, n. 13.

(4) So ardent a partisan was he that he switched the Blue and Green grandstands in the hippodrome so that he could look directly across at the Greens when seated in the Kathisma (MALALAS, pp. 350-1).

(5) Jo. DIAC., *V. Greg.*, I, p. 40 (*PL*, LXXV, 79B), with R. PARET, *REB*, XV (1957), p. 56.

whatever offence Maurice may have given the Blues on this occasion, he soon atoned for by naming one of his five subsequent sons Justinian (1).

There are two other examples of the factions naming members of the imperial family — the renaming of the wives of Justin I and Tiberius II on their coronations. It has been suggested that it was for religious reasons that the factions gave Justin's Lupicina the more auspicious name Euphemia (2). Euphemia was the name of a favourite saint of Chalcedon, and since a late tradition makes her the patroness of the council of Chalcedon, authoress by a miracle of its decision, it has been argued that the name came to have anti-monophysite associations. Many objections could be raised. One could point out, for example, that there is nothing to suggest that this name was the idea of the Blues rather than the Greens or both combined (Theophanes refers only to 'the demes'); that we do not even know whether Justin was a Blue, still less Lupicina (that their nephew Justinian was a Blue proves nothing); that even if such evidence did exist, it would be quite false to suggest that Euphemia was 'un mot d'ordre dyophysiste' (Grégoire). Euphemia's feast was regularly included in Coptic, Jacobite and Ethiopic calendars, and the arch-monophysite Severus of Antioch wrote a hymn in her honour (3). The tradition of her role at the council of Chalcedon cannot be traced before the eighth century. But one text will suffice, Theophanes' description of how in November 561 some *Greens* fleeing before Justinian's guards took refuge in the church of St. Euphemia at Chalcedon (4). It

(1) *Chron. Pasch.*, p. 693.13 (another son was called Justin, a name borne by two orthodox Emperors).

(2) H. GRÉGOIRE, *Sainte Euphémie et l'Empereur Maurice*, in *Le Muséon*, LIX (1946), p. 295f.; A. MARICQ, *BARB*, XXXV (1949), p. 64, n. 2.

(3) E. HONIGMAN, *Byzantion*, XX (1950), p. 349; R. PARET, *REB*, XV (1957), pp. 62-5; F. HALKIN, *Euphémie de Chalcédoine* (*Subsid. Hagiogr.*, 41), 1965, XII. On the significance attributed by Grégoire to the sobriquet 'Marcionist' given to Maurice by the crowd in 602, see PARET, pp. 58-60. Hence the scepticism Maurice displayed concerning miracles allegedly worked at Euphemia's shrine (SIMOCATTA, VIII, 14) cannot be used to support the theory of anti-Chalcedonian sympathies in Maurice (so Grégoire, last note). Such scepticism can perhaps be better understood against the background of the unease at the marked rise in the veneration of such phenomena in the years following the reign of Justinian which eventually exploded in the iconoclast movement: see E. KITZINGER, *The cult of Images in the Age before Iconoclasm*, in *DOP*, VIII (1954), pp. 83-105.

(4) P. 236.12.

is hard to believe that the Greens could not, had they wished, have found another asylum in a city so rich in churches as Constantinople — one that did not involve the crossing of the Propontis.

For the renaming of Tiberius' wife we have John of Ephesus again, a contemporary account by one who knew Tiberius personally. The Blues suggested Anastasia, the Greens Helena (¹). Now if such names were chosen for their christological associations, what would Anastasia call to mind but the arch-monophysite Anastasius? Yet this was the choice of the supposedly orthodox Blues. Tiberius approved Anastasia, but John's only comment is that the factions fell to fighting for the honour of naming the Empress. The natural inference is that Anastasia was chosen by the Blues and approved by Tiberius for no other reason than that it was a good Christian name.

The Greens drew attention to Theodosius II's orthodoxy and longevity simply as subsidiary arguments of good omen in favour of the name. Since their interpretation of Theodosius' orthodoxy was not questioned, and in view of the other evidence in favour of their orthodoxy, there seems no reason to doubt that here too they reveal themselves orthodox.

Lastly, we must consider some sixth or seventh century inscriptions which on the face of it might seem strong evidence in favour of the religious character of the factions. First one from Ephesus (²):

ὁρθοδόξων	Πρασίνων
χριστιανῶν	βασιλέων

This is one of a series of factional inscriptions from Ephesus, all apparently of about the same period (³). Two name Phocas and the Blues, one Heraclius and the Greens, the rest just the Greens, with or without unnamed 'pious Emperors'. It is beyond dispute

(1) III.9, p. 182 Payne Smith.

(2) H. GRÉGOIRE, *I.G.C. As. min.*, I (1922), no. 114 bis, with Y. JANSSENS, *Byz.*, XI (1936), p. 527 and A. CHRISTOPHILOPULU, *Char. A. K. Orlandos*, II (1966), pp. 351-2.

(3) Put together by JANSSENS, *Byz.*, XI (1936), p. 526f., though her (and Grégoire's) datings are not always sound: cf. too F. DÖLGER, *BZ*, XXXVIII (1938), pp. 526-7, and A. CHRISTOPHILOPULU, *op. cit.*, p. 351f.

that at the end of his reign Phocas relied on the Blues while the Greens backed Heraclius' rebellion. Grégoire and Janssens infer that our inscription dates from the very beginning of Phocas' reign, while he was still well disposed to the Greens. But the plural *βασιλέων*, while it *could* refer to Phocas and his wife Leontia, is more naturally taken as implying a plurality of Emperors; the two inscriptions which name Phocas directly do so as sole Emperor.

As before, the use of the word 'orthodox' here proves nothing either way. But let us assume that the Greens of Ephesus were in fact monophysite. If so, then the 'Christian Emperors' they link with their own 'orthodoxy' would also be monophysite. Yet at no time during the sixth and seventh centuries was there a plurality of monophysite Emperors. Indeed, there was no plurality of Emperors of any creed before Heraclius and his son Heraclius the younger (co-Emperor from 612). So great was the prestige of Theodora and Justin II's wife Sophia that they might have been styled *βασιλεῖς* jointly with their husbands; whether Zeno's wife Ariadne would have is doubtful. The inscription is probably more recent than that anyway. We have seen already that Anastasius, though married and a monophysite, was not a Green.

It follows that our assumption was mistaken. The 'orthodox Greens' of our inscriptions were not monophysites, nor were their 'Christian Emperors'. Heraclius and his son would seem the obvious candidates — especially in view of a parallel inscription from Ephesus directly linking both Heraclius and his son with the Greens ⁽¹⁾:

*Ἡρακλ(ή)ου καὶ Ἡρακλήου τῶν θεοφυλάκτων ἡμῶν δε-
σποτῶν καὶ τῶν Πρασίνων πολλὰ τὰ ἔτη.*

There is in fact no example of an inscription which links an Emperor's name with a faction before Phocas and Heraclius. Phocas seems to have fostered the rivalry of the factions like no Emperor before him, and in the civil war the Blues fought valiantly for him (and not in Constantinople alone), the Greens for Heraclius ⁽²⁾. Phocas' patronage is attested as far afield as the Blue club-house in Oxyrhynchus: a column inscribed on one side *τόπος διαφέρων τοῖς Βενέτοις* and the other *Φωκά τοῦ [εὐ]σεβεστάτου*

(1) The last six words were added later.

(2) Y. JANSSENS, *Byz.*, XI (1936), pp. 522-531, and (more briefly) J. R. MARTINDALE, *Public Disorders in the Late Roman Empire*, pp. 94-5.

ἡμῶν δεσπότου πολλὰ τὰ ἔτη⁽¹⁾. Particularly suggestive is another Ephesian inscription, *χριστιανῶν βασιλέων καὶ Πρασίνων πολλὰ τὰ ἔτη*, where *Πρασίνων* has been inscribed over an almost but not entirely erased *Βενέτων*⁽²⁾. It is tempting to infer that the inscription originally referred to Phocas but was altered after his defeat and the disgrace of the Blues in 610. This would strengthen the case for referring the 'orthodox Greens' inscription to Heraclius and his son.

This is one more inscription mentioning Green orthodoxy, from a village on the boundary between Phrygia and Pisidia⁽³⁾:

ὁ θεὸς τῶν ἀρχαγγέλων σύνπ [ρ]αξὸν τοὺς τῇ[ς] κούμης μου
πᾶσιν καὶ Πρασίνον τὸν [ὁρ]θωδόξον.

The sense of this illiterate *cri du cœur* is as follows: 'God of the archangels, help all the inhabitants of my village (i.e. κούμης) and the orthodox Greens'. It looks as if both villagers and Greens stood in some danger. One thinks of the savage Green persecutions under Phocas⁽⁴⁾, but obviously there may have been other more local threats to this village.

Whatever the date, there does not seem to be any implied contrast between the orthodox Greens and Blues who are *not* orthodox. The villager appeals to the orthodoxy of his fellow-Greens simply in the hope that it might serve to protect them.

The same surely applies to the inscription from Ephesus. The fact that the Greens take pride in their orthodoxy does not necessarily imply that the Blues were *not* orthodox. However much the Greens may have hated Phocas, they could hardly have impugned his Chalcedonianism. This interpretation of such inscriptions is strongly supported by the latest to be found, *νηκᾶ* (sic) ἡ τύχη *Πρασίνων τῶν ὀρθοδόξων* from Phthiotic Thebes⁽⁵⁾. It is hard to

(1) *Stud. it. di fil.*, XIX (1912), p. 305; cf. CHRISTOPHILOPULU, p. 355, nos. 22-3 and pp. 346-7.

(2) H. GRÉGOIRE, *I.G.C. As. min.*, I, p. 114.5, and CHRISTOPHILOPULU, p. 351 no. 8.

(3) H. GRÉGOIRE, *I.G.C. As. min.*, I, p. 311; CHRISTOPHILOPULU, p. 353, no. 11 (Janssen's transcription, *op. cit.*, p. 527, is very inaccurate). For the exact location of the place, L. ROBERT, *Hellenica*, X (1955), pp. 228-39. GRÉGOIRE, no. 114, could be supplemented as another reference to orthodoxy, but not necessarily: cf. CHRISTOPHILOPULU, p. 353, no. 12. So could SEG, VIII, p. 213: cf. *Porphyrius*, p. 74, n. 3.

(4) *Doctrina Jacobi*, p. 39 for Antioch.

(5) *Πρακ. 'Αρχ. Έταιρ.*, 1969 (1971), p. 21.

believe that monophysites were strong in this part of the world, or indeed that Phthiotic Thebes was torn by any sort of heresy.

In short, these inscriptions tell us rather less than has been supposed. We have confirmation of what need never have been doubted: that (even at Ephesus) the Greens were orthodox. But they imply nothing one way or the other about the Blues.

V

One scholar has stressed the antisemitism of the factions, the Greens in particular (1). He has even gone so far as to link the alleged decline of the factions in the seventh century with an alleged 'antisemitic crisis' of the seventh century. The Emperors are supposed to have encouraged the factions, hitherto always divided, to unite in the persecution of the Jews.

Another edifice built on sand. The factions did *not* 'decline' in the seventh century (2). Nor is there any evidence for massive persecution of Jews between the edicts of Heraclius in 632 and Leo III in 721/2 (3). Indeed, according to the latest historian of Byzantine Jewry (4), Heraclius' edict was a 'single violent gesture', without significant effect on either the legal status or the daily life of most Jewish inhabitants of the Empire. But there is evidence for antisemitism from the factions and it does merit brief consideration.

There was apparently something of a tradition of it among the Greens of Antioch. According to Malalas a riot was caused there under Zeno by the Jews sitting with the Blues in the hippodrome (5), (we may now compare the theatre of Aphrodisias, where graffiti by both Blues and Jews appear on the same row of seats) (6). Porphyrius led the Greens to burn a synagogue at Daphne in 507 (7).

(1) G. I. BRATIANU, *BZ*, XXXVIII (1937), pp. 96-7, and more fully in *Rev. Hist. du Sud-Est Européen*, XVIII (1941), pp. 49-67.

(2) Indeed, they actually *increased* in importance, as their role in the *Book of Ceremonies* proves (I shall be justifying this view elsewhere).

(3) J. STARR, *The Jews in the Byzantine Empire* (1939), p. 1.

(4) A. SHARF, *Byzantine Jewry from Justinian to the fourth Crusade* (1971), pp. 53-7.

(5) Fr. 35, *Exc. de Ins.*, p. 167.

(6) Unpublished inscription kindly shown to me by Charlotte Roueché.

(7) MALALAS, pp. 395-8.

We hear also how an ascetic monk urged the Greens to burn another synagogue, after which they dug up a Jewish graveyard and burned such remains as they found. Zeno sent a message expressing his anger — anger that they hadn't burned live Jews as well ⁽¹⁾! But it would be wholly misleading to suggest that the issue around which factional rivalry revolved in Antioch was Judaism. It is perfectly clear from our distastefully abundant sources that Jews were held in almost universal dislike among Christians by the fifth and sixth centuries. They had been persecuted at Antioch long before the Blues and Greens ⁽²⁾, and it is likely that the Blues of Zeno's day protected Jews less out of disinterested philojudaism than simply to annoy the Greens.

Moreover, it is not as though there was a consistent pattern of protection by the Blues and persecution by the Greens. This may have been what usually happened at Antioch, but elsewhere the story might be different. The memoirs of a Palestinian Jew called Jacob, forcibly converted to Christianity under Heraclius' law of 632, are most illuminating here. Before his conversion Jacob's chief aim in life had been to pay Christians back for the persecution he had suffered at their hands. To this end he often took advantage of factional riots. When in Rhodes he laid about some Blues pretending to be a Green ⁽³⁾. In Constantinople, on the other hand, he handed Christians over to the Blues alleging that they were 'Greens and Jews'. On another occasion there he set about Greens himself, pretending to be a Blue. And when he heard that Phocas' lieutenant Bonosus was persecuting Greens in Antioch, to Antioch hurried the resourceful and single-minded Jacob, where he again set about Greens in the guise of a Blue. But when the star of the Blues set with the fall of their patron Phocas, there was Jacob

(1) MALALAS, fr. 35, *Exc. de Ins.*, p. 167.10f. The Greek text (only an excerpt) does not specify Antioch, a detail preserved only in the Church Slavonic version (transl. Spinka and Downey, 1940), pp. 109-12.

(2) Though despite BRATIANU (*Rev. Hist.*, 1941, p. 57), MALALAS, p. 244.15f., does not link either Blues or Greens with anti-semitism at Antioch under Caligula, as a careful reading of the passage will show. It hardly matters, since the reference to Blues and Greens here is an anachronism in any case.

(3) *Doctrina Jacobi nuper Baptizati*, ed. N. Bonwetsch, *Abh. d. Kön. Ges. d. Wiss. z. Göttingen*, Phil.-hist. Klasse, N.F. XII.3 (1910), p. 89.

waiting in Constantinople to set about Bonosus in the midst of a Green lynch party (1).

A fascinating saga. But what does it actually prove except that either faction might persecute Jews, and that Jews in turn might take their revenge on either faction? That is to say, Jews can hardly be regarded as an issue that could be counted upon to *divide* the factions. In an age when most Christians disliked Jews, it is small gain to discover that the Blues and Greens did too.

The well-documented affair at Antioch in 507 will repay closer study. The burning of the synagogue was an incidental consequence, not the original purpose, of the Hippodrome riot. It is important to appreciate the significance of the fact that Malalas traces the violence directly to the arrival of Porphyrius in Antioch. Had Malalas been less explicit we might have pictured Porphyrius as an agitator, exploiting his personal popularity for racial and political ends. In fact Malalas makes it quite clear that it was simply by winning for them in the Hippodrome that Porphyrius inflamed the Greens to the pitch where they were capable of such atrocities. Kings of the Hippodrome once more after a series of defeats, the elation of the Greens erupted into a violence that consumed all comers: not just Jews nor even Blues, but police, troops and three successive counts of the East.

Socrates describes a battle between Jews and Christians at Alexandria in 412 that had mushroomed out of a dispute about pantomime dancers (2). It is clear that anti-semitism was again the consequence rather than the cause of the trouble. 'The people rioted' says Socrates, 'for no important reason, but because of that inveterate evil in all cities, enthusiasm for dancing'. Once tempers were lost and the violence had begun, the original cause might be lost to view and (as at Antioch, and often elsewhere before and since) the unhappy Jews found themselves the victims.

We may, I think, reject altogether the view that Blues and Greens represented permanently the orthodox and monophysite parties — or indeed any other sectarian movements. Despite the lack of direct evidence about the Blues, there is no cause to

(1) *Doctrina Jacobi*, p. 39.

(2) *HE*, VII.13.

doubt that both were in general orthodox. Had either not been so, there is a very simple reason why we should have heard.

Games had always had a religious significance at Rome ⁽¹⁾, and circus racing was no exception. Ovid has left us a particularly vivid account of the procession of the gods that opened a day's racing ⁽²⁾. An image of each was carried round the arena on a litter to the applause of the spectators — with the mischievous young Ovid, all thoughts on his girl, reserving his claps for Venus and Victoria! Naturally this feature of the games did not make them any more acceptable to Christians already predisposed to object on general moral grounds, as (*inter alia*) the *De Spectaculis* of Tertullian shows.

Naturally enough the victory of Christianity changed the nature of these religious ceremonies. But this is not all that it brought. The religious element became increasingly important. As he entered the hippodrome the Emperor would greet his subjects with the sign of the cross and they would hail him as God's earthly representative. The factions would sing hymns, the charioteers would leave the arena and drive to the nearest church to give thanks after their victories.

The ceremonial which became such an important part of faction activity must be discussed more fully elsewhere. For the moment it will suffice to stress the high religious content in their most ordinary utterances. 'Glory to God who strengthens the orthodox. Glory to God who casts down the deniers of the Trinity. Glory to God who destroys the deniers of the Mother of God'. These are typical extracts from the ceremonial for an imperial victory ⁽³⁾. In their present form these acclamations date from the tenth century, but plainly they go back a long way. This sort of pressure towards orthodoxy was already a central feature of religious life in the fifth century. When the Empress Ariadne appeared in the Hippodrome on 10 April 491 to proclaim the successor to Zeno, 'an orthodox Emperor for the world' was the chant that naturally came to the lips of the people as they looked up at her in expecta-

(1) See most recently BALSDON, *Life and Leisure in Ancient Rome* (1969), 244f.

(2) *Amores*, III.2.

(3) *De Caer.*, I. 69, 332 R = II. 135-6 V.

tion (1). 'We give you an orthodox and holy man', she said in reply (2).

If only in virtue of the power of their lungs and their expertise in chanting, the Blues and Greens soon became spokesmen for all who gathered in the hippodrome. Had they really differed so radically in their respective interpretations of orthodoxy as modern scholars maintain, this would have become obvious within minutes on every race day, and it is unlikely that the racing would ever have got started. The orthodox would have provoked a heretical chant from their rivals and before long the other spectators would have joined in on one side or the other. Quite apart from the fact that there is no evidence that this ever happened, much less regularly, no Emperor could have tolerated such a permanent incentive to religious division. Quite the contrary. One of the main purposes of the religious side of hippodrome ceremonial was to serve as an incentive to religious *solidarity*; to create and foster the all important theme of an Emperor appointed by God as the protector of the faithful and champion of orthodoxy.

There is no need to assume that the factions were any *less* concerned about religion than their fellow men. Orthodoxy was vital to the Byzantine, and he well knew the many pitfalls that beset the path of the true believer. No doubt from time to time the Blues and Greens took part with the next man in the doctrinal crises of the day. In the four cases we know of — Constantinople in 512 and 820, Alexandria in the 480s and Antioch in 583 — it so happens that the threat served to unite them. We must allow the possibility that on other occasions it may have divided them, though in view of the complete lack of evidence in our sources it looks as though such occurrences were both infrequent and uncharacteristic.

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(1) I. 92, 418. 19 R.

(2) P. 521, 13 R.